

THE
FISH AND THE RING ;
OR,
THE FORTUNATE
FARMER'S DAUGHTER.

A Tale founded on Facts.

So there was great joy unto all that did see
The poor Farmer's Daughter a Lady to be.
OLD BALLAD.



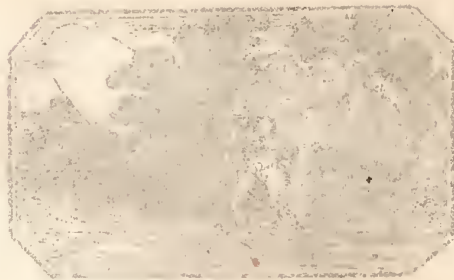
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1838.

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THE FISH AND THE RING.
had on taking the child from the nurse he had
appointed to take care of it, rode down the river;
on the border of which he laid the poor infant;
but the tide being low, as it rose, floated her to a
small creek, where a peasant was repairing
his net. Finding the distressing cries of a young
child, he took her up, and took her to his home;
in a few days she was recovered, and not having
children of her own made no difficulty of taking
care of it. Time elapsed the child so to the
house of the peasant, that they brought her up as
their own child, and she grew up to be a young
woman, and at the age of eleven years, she could
knit three fish, and work with any
other in the parish. And it must also be ad-

THE subject of this little history, Rebecca Rus-
sel, was the youngest daughter of a middling farmer
in Yorkshire, where she was born about the year
1619. Her life was long, and marked with many
particulars, that evince the governing hand of
Providence in human affairs.

The name of Russel is illustrious and ancient.
Her father's family had been opulent and indepen-
dent; but, unfortunately for his children, had fallen
into decay; and he became incapable of providing
for them until years of maturity. Some became
servants in the neighbourhood; and the youngest,
the subject of the present narrative, was taken,
almost as soon as born, by a Knight of the Shire,
who pretended to adopt her for his own; but being
very much given to the study of astrology, he soon
perceived by the planets, that this little girl was
born to a wonderful fortune, and at last to be his
wife. This knowledge disconcerted him so much,
that, after casting many figures, the whole result
of which was, that it was to come to pass as he
had at first discovered, he formed the horrid reso-
lution of drowning the poor little girl.

He rose early one morning to perpetrate his pur-

pose; and taking the child from the nurse he had appointed to take care of it, rode down the river, on the border of which he laid the poor infant; but the tide being low, as it rose, floated her to a small creek, where a poor fisherman was repairing his net. Hearing the distressing cries of a young child, he looked round, and quickly took it up. His wife applauded his humanity; and not having children of her own made no difficulty of taking care of it. Time endeared the child so to the honest couple, that they brought her up, giving her such learning as their scanty means would allow, and at the age of eleven years, she could knit, dress fish, and do household-work, with any of her age in the parish. And it must also be added, that she was wonderfully fair, and could read her psalter.

Eleven years had elapsed since the honest fisherman found this child upon the same element as the Princess Pharaoh found the infant Moses, when, being drinking at an inn near the Ouse Bridge with some gentlemen, this little girl was sent by her mother, as she had been taught to call her, to fetch her father home from the meeting. Among these gentlemen was the cruel Knight spoken of in the first part of this history, who perceiving the maiden to be very likely, asked the fisherman if he would part with her, and he would make a great lady of her. When the fisherman had told his story, how he had found the child afloat upon the water as he was fishing within his own bounds, it brought to the Knight's reflection his former transaction: and, instead of relenting, he formed another resolution to destroy her, if possible; and how to accomplish this design was now his earnest intent.

"Then spake the Knight, and unto him he said,

"If you will part with this sweet lovely maid,

"I'll give you whatever your heart can devise,

"For I see she to honors and riches may rise."

The fisherman refused at first the Knight's pro-

posal; but, upon consulting his wife, at last agreed; urged thereto, no doubt, by their poorness of circumstances.

The Knight having her now in his power, dressed her up very costly and fine, and made his acquaintance believe he was going to do every thing for her that he declared. For about a month, or so, he behaved with much regard and generosity, both to the poor child and to her foster-father and mother; paying their rent, which was in arrears, and giving him a new boat, with two sets of sails, and all sorts of fishing tackle; enough to make him as substantial a fisherman as any in the whole county of York. The planets were again consulted, and were found as at first; and Sir John determined once more to put her away in a surer manner than he had done before. The silly man foolishly thought that he could thwart the designs of heaven: but there is a fate in human affairs, and what is to be, shall be; nor is it in man to order according to his will; "That blindness to the future kindly given," should not be so arrogantly peeped into as these astrologers think; for as a very moral poet observes,

"The lamb, thy riot dooms to bleed to day,

"Had he thy reason, would he skip and play?

"Pleas'd to the last, he crops his flow'ry food,

"And licks the hand just rais'd to shed his blood."

Therefore, presumptuous is that man that endeavours to learn, and afterwards attempts to defeat, the high purposes of heaven; but, after all, the ways of Providence are past finding out. This story illustrates the above maxim.

"Who reasons otherwise, betrays his sense,

"And raises laughter at his own expence."

This Knight had a brother in Lancashire, a man of substance. To him he sends this girl, with a man-servant of his, charged with a letter, directing his said brother how to dispose of the child; but in the way, as they chanced to put up at an inn

on the road, a thief broke in, and coming into the room where the servant lay, opened the portmantau, and took out the letter, the Knight, his master, had written to his brother, containing his directions for the girl's banishment and destruction. The thief, a gallant young fellow, fond of frolic and fun, finding what sort of an errand the servant was sent upon, immediately wrote another letter, quite contrary to the intent and meaning of the first, recommending her as follows:—

"Dear brother,
"Receive this young maiden from me,
"And bring her up well; as a maiden should be;
"And let her have servants and fine cloathes I pray;
"And so, loving brother, I prithee attend;
"Subscribing myself, your dear brother and friend."

The servant, missing nothing next morning, went his way, and safely delivered his charge to the Lancashire Knight, who received her very courteously. The servant having delivered his credentials, returned home, bearing back a letter, as a testimonial of his service, and a compliance of the Knight's brother to do all things according to the intent of his letter.

The Knight now thought he had completely defeated the power of Heaven, and that he could go on his usual ways; always prying into futurity, and always miserable with his forbidden foreknowledge of future events.

Things remained in this way for seven long years, during which time Becky Russel grew up to years of maturity, and improved so much in her education, that she was the admiration of all who knew her.

The Lancashire Knight was stricken in years, passing well forty-five; and he saw in this maiden something more than he ought, in a ward, as she was to him. To soften her into a compliance with his desires, he made her first in love with herself. The praise of her person, her beauty, and her mind,

were the sole topics of his conversation. He was an adept in the arts of sophistry and seduction. She a novice in the stratagems of deceit.

Though no girl ever possessed more self-denial than Rebecca Russel, or was better calculated to support a platonic connection, yet she could not totally dislike the man who had deluded her into an admiration of herself; add too, that he was her guardian, and as such claimed the first tribute of her respect and gratitude. She found herself in this manner attached to her flatterer without reciprocating his passion: and with a mind pure from every unchaste emotion, she suffered herself to be deluded into a matrimonial scheme with a man old enough to be her father.

Just as the day was arrived for celebrating their nuptials, the Yorkshire Knight arrived at his brother's seat in Lancashire; and was not a little surprised to find this maiden, whom the stars had portended so fatally, as he thought, to be his wife, alive, and so near becoming his kinswoman. At first he argued; he next was downright angry; and at last stormed at his brother, who, when he saw the letter which his servant had brought with the maid, declared in a moment, it was an imposition and a forgery. These two brothers had a great altercation; and the Yorkshire Knight succeeded at last in suspending the nuptials. The stars he now declared once more had decreed a different fate for the poor girl; and consulting with Lilly and Gadbury, two noted astrologers and almanac-makers of those days, he took the fatal resolution again of finding her a watery grave.

For this purpose he took her under a false pretence to the Bristol waters. Here he had tried often, and as often in vain, to put her out of existence; but every time a strong compunction came over his mind, which made him desist. Most of

these scenes were acted among St. Vincent's rocks, and the last had nearly proved fatal to the Yorkshire Knight; for a gentleman coming that way, rescued her from her cruel oppressor, who, upon his declaring it was but an affair of love between the maiden and himself, was suffered by the gentleman to go without that chastisement he so richly merited.

This gentleman, whose name was Thomas Elton, took Becky home, and, on hearing her relate her history, resolved on seeing her delivered from such a barbarous oppressor, and unnatural guardian.

For this purpose he waited on Sir John, the Yorkshire Knight, when they agreed to decide their difference by dropping a ring into the sea; with this provision, that whenever Rebecca Russel could produce it to the Knight, she should have half his estate; but while she could not she must be content to live in obscurity, and not aspire to any thing above a servant's degree.

Having examined the poesy well round the ring, and being satisfied with this singular mode of settlement, the ring was committed to the sea, with as much formality, as when the Doge of Venice annually weds that element.

It was now that the Yorkshire Knight thought once more he had defeated the influence of the stars; for it was impossible, in his opinion, that the ring could ever come out of the sea, and get into the girl's possession again; but in this he was mightily mistaken, as will hereafter appear.

The parties now separated: Sir John retired into Yorkshire; and Becky went home with Mr. Elton, at whose house she became as one of his family. The flurry occasioned by the bad conduct of Sir John, threw her into a violent fever, which for several days threatened her life. Upon her recovery, she wrote into Lancashire, but obtained no sort of an answer to her letter, as her guardian was dead. As she recovered by degrees, she

appeared both to herself, and to every one who saw her, a new being; her natural complaisancy of behaviour began again to reanimate her whole frame. Her eyes sparkled with unusual lustre; she scarcely touched the ground as she walked; and the sound of her voice seemed to vie, for musical sprightliness, with the morning lark. Mr. Elton had some years before allied himself, by marriage, to a lady of high birth, whose accomplishments might have embellished the greatest scenes, had not a love of domestic life, and a religious cast of mind, induced her to prefer retirement to the splendour of a court; and Mr. Elton's fortune was just sufficient to enable her to perform her charities and good offices in the neighbourhood. All the leisure hours which her family did not call for, were spent in duties which at that time ladies of the noblest rank exercised, without thinking they demeaned their stations; she relieved the indigent, advised with the unfortunate, visited the sick, and brought up her son Thomas, and two daughters, Anna and Frances, in the same hospitable way. With these worthy characters, Rebecca Russel domesticated; and the agreeableness of her manners made her beloved by all who had the happiness of her acquaintance. As these two children were the sole issue of Mr. and Mrs. Elton, they devoted much of their attention to their education; and had the comfort to find in their minds so rich a soil, that every thing prospered that was planted in them.

These young folks were nearly of an age with Rebecca. They won the admiration of all who approached them: and had, from similitude of manners, contracted such a warm affection for each other, that it seemed as if nature, by forming them alike, had prepared them for those effusions of elevated friendship, which the losses and crosses of this world was one day or other to call forth.

"Sweet were the hours they pass'd together;
 "One wish rose mutual from the heart;
 "So like their minds, they knew not whether
 "They most rejoic'd to meet or part."
 A severe event to try their affections I was not
 very remote. Mrs. Elton was seized by a sudden
 illness, which in a few days, desolated one of the
 happiest families in the world. Thomas, and his sister Frances, had the weight
 of a father's sorrow added to their own, which
 compelled them to conceal much of their feelings;
 great as they were; and to assume a fortitude their
 hearts disavowed. Rebecca was as much affected
 as her young friends; for she had formed a thorough
 respect for the good old lady, whom she had begun
 to look on as a mother. As for Mr. Elton, though
 he called in aid all his philosophy to support him-
 self under the loss of his beloved wife, yet his
 silent sorrow had so visible an effect on his health,
 as to threaten his life; in addition to which, his
 eldest daughter, Anna, whom he had by a former
 marriage, went astray, notwithstanding her dear
 departed mother's admonitions, and her father's
 advice. This young girl had listened to the in-
 sidious, blandishing speeches of a neighbouring
 nobleman; and at last, about six months after her
 mother's death, was missing from home, having run
 away with him. But she was not long gone;
 for she soon returned; ruined, to be sure; when
 the joy of her poor father, on the occasion, was so
 great, that he died on the spot. Anna's grief was
 so excessive, that, notwithstanding all her brother
 and sister could say, with Rebecca's meditation,
 she resigned up her existence in a flood of tears;
 and she was interred the Sunday following in the
 same grave near her mother.

Fair Anna, her father's once comfort and joy
 Was courted by many a swain:
 Contentment's felicity never can cloy;
 She would not for wealth that contentment destroy,
 And rejected each hand with disdain.

True filial affection b'nd love did prevail,
 And to love she prefer'd the sweet Cot of the Vale.
 The lord of the manor resolv'd to ensnare
 This maid, deck'd in Nature's gay charms;
 The day, as he watch'd round the cottage with care,
 He saw lovely Anna, enchantingly fair,
 And bore her away in his arms.
 Her father deserted, her loss did bewail,
 And sorrowing left the dear Cot of the Vale.
 Despairing to find her, he sank on the spot,
 And call'd on her name as he fell;
 And now, see, disherv'd, she enters the cot;
 She falls on the body, resign'd to her lot,
 And of life takes a lasting farewell.
 The tribute of penitence nought can avail,
 For they lie in one grave near the Cot of the Vale.

A great change ensues always whenever death
 enters a family. In this mournful interval, the
 greatest comfort these three young folks received,
 was from the frequent visits of Mr. Elton's brother,
 a clergyman residing in St. Augustin's, in Bristol.
 He was reputed to be a man of so much learning
 and virtue, that the deceased by his will recom-
 mended his children to his care and protection;
 not even forgetting Rebecca, to whom he left a
 handsome legacy, considering his own children's
 inheritance.

Rebecca, who had so long been in the family,
 felt equally with the brother, and sister, the loss of
 two good parents. Attachments formed in youth
 at parity of years, are often very lasting. The
 manner in which Mrs. Elton brought up Frances,
 added to her natural turn of mind, determined her
 to a religious life; and a reformed convent of nuns,
 not very distant from Bristol, happening at that
 time to lose the principal, the Abbot of St. Augus-
 tin, perceiving her fixed in her scheme of life, pro-
 cured her to be named the principal lady of it.
 The separation of Frances from her brother, was
 not so severely felt as by Rebecca, who would, on
 this occasion, most willingly have taken the veil
 also; and it was with great difficulty that she was
 dissuaded from that purpose; nor was she prevail'd

on to relinquish entirely her intention of entering on a religious life, till young Elton had used every argument in his power in supporting his sister's reasons, the principal of which was, her want of sufficient fortune to assist herself in such a situation. Rebecca and young Elton resided for some time together in her father's house, accompanied by a widowed aunt, his father's sister, who, at intervals, attended them on their visits to sister Frances; and at proper times, to the reverend clergyman of St. Augustin's. In one of these visits to Mr. Elton's uncle, the abbot, Rebecca became acquainted with Robert Berry, between whose father and the abbot there had long subsisted a firm and indissoluble friendship. He was of good birth, but small fortune, his father's estate having greatly suffered in the confusion of those turbulent times. Berry had not yet passed the prime of life; his figure was such as became a soldier well; and his understanding had been cultivated as much as the fashion of those times allowed to a person of middling descent. He was now on his return from a short expedition into France, and had stopped at Bristol, to pay his respects to the Abbot, who had been so long and firm a friend to his father. Berry had many friends; and some of the prime nobility would not have blushed to have added his military honours to those of their house. After many repeated visits to Mr. Elton, he found himself enamoured of his fair companion; and had the satisfaction to perceive that his attention to her was not thrown away. Having reason to think he had made a favourable impression on Rebecca, he did not long hesitate to propose himself to her as one who would be happy to pass his life in the society of so engaging a woman. His offer was not less pleasing to her than it was to her friend, Elton's uncle, and to Frances, the latter of whom

agreed to give up to her, the right in the paternal cottage of her family, where it was proposed they should reside. Every thing was prepared for their settlement, and their nuptials were celebrated at the old monastery. Nothing could wear a fairer face of prosperity than this union did till his duty called him to arms, to quell an insurrection in the west, when the unfortunate James, Duke of Monmouth, attempted to seize his uncle's crown. The parties met, and had a fatal engagement together, when the King's troops completely routed the rebels; though not without the loss of many valuable officers and men; and among others, Captain Berry fell wounded in his breast, with a broken thigh, occasioned by his horse being killed under him. The rebels lost five times the number; they having but few horse, was the cause of this disadvantage.

A fever ensued in consequence of Berry's wounds, and he found himself dying. But a little before he expired, he desired pen and ink to be brought him, when he made his will, by which he left a small estate he possessed in Leicester to his wife; and after a few other memorandums, he inclosed it in a letter to the uncle of Mr. Elton in Bristol, conjuring him to unfold it with caution and tenderness to his dear wife, in such a manner as to shock her as little as possible; and charged him, in particular, to tell her, that his last thoughts were on herself; and his only sigh on leaving the world, was for being separated from her whose virtues so embellished it.

The pious old man, when he opened the letter, dropped a tear of affection over the paper; and journeying to Bristol with a sorrowful heart for the death of his friend's son, presented himself to Rebecca with such a countenance, as scarcely needed a tongue to tell his melancholy errand. Young

Elton also joined with him in the mournful occasion, and both poured the balm of friendship over the woes of the gallant soldier's widow. The good man spared none of that ghostly comfort which a Christian would offer on such an occasion; and Rebecca giving way to the first transports of grief, assumed a fortitude and resignation which her piety alone could inspire. Though the emotions of nature must subside before the soothing voice of reason can be heard, as soon as her mind was more settled and fortified, she communicated her final resolution to her friend, Abbess Frances. After an infinite deal of persuasion and advice to sooth her melancholy, the Abbess found the young widow, her friend, still more determined in her resolution to enter into a religious life; and as soon as her affairs were properly adjusted, and she had claimed her husband's estate in the city of Leicester, she took up her abode in the convent of which her friend Frances was Abbess.

Rebecca found in religion the only consolation for her past misfortunes. These two friends, after a while enjoyed all the solid pleasure which can alone arise from sincere friendship; and as the effects of benevolent dispositions operate on all around, theirs served to communicate happiness to all the sisterhood.

Thus these friends lived in the utmost harmony near ten years, during which time Mr. Elton went abroad, where he succeeded very well in the Turkey trade, a branch of business at that time very flourishing in the hands of the English. Soon after his return, the Abbess was seized with an alarming fever, the effects of which hung so long upon her, and had such an operation on her mind, that it was not thought possible she could ever recover. Rebecca Berry was constantly with her; and Mr. Elton paid them the utmost attention; and when the greatest danger was thought to be over,

the physician advised her to travel for the benefit of the air, and particularly to the sea-side, where she was ordered to bathe during the summer months. It has not, I believe, been observed before, but should be now, that the personages we are relating about, were not absolutely Catholics, but mystic Protestants, whose manner yet approached somewhat nearer to the church of Rome, in the circumstance of having religious establishments called Protestant nunneries.

Thither to one of these, of the order of the Virgin, these friends made their way. It was situated at a little port on the Isle of Thanet, called Bradstowe, near Broadstairs, and which had been in such great repute for the sanctity of its professors before the reformation, that pilgrims had visited it from far; and ships are reported to have constantly lowered their topsails to salute it. The feast of the invention of the holy cross, which was the third day of May, being to be celebrated there with great solemnity, determined Frances to be present on the occasion, and return the Almighty thanks for her recovery.

Rebecca obtained permission to accompany her friend on this journey of devotion and recovery; and the roads being little frequented at that time to what they are now, they put themselves with two attendants on board a passage vessel; but had not been at sea above four hours, before a violent storm arose. Every one who is the least versed in navigation, or acquainted with this coast quite round to the north, knows how difficult it is to sail there in stormy weather.

They soon found it impracticable to pursue their course with any certainty of direction; all night, and part of the next day, they kept working the vessel up to the intended point, when, all of a sudden, the mast broke short to the deck; and about an hour after the rudder parted from the stern,

leaving the boat still more at the mercy of the waves. In this forlorn situation they beat about two days more, the wind being too strong to allow them to make one tack towards any port. At last the thick fog clearing up just before night, they were enabled to make the port of Whitby, in Yorkshire; but their endeavour to reach the shore was soon frustrated, by the storm driving from it; and their sails being all shattered, a sudden swell of the sea bore them quite out of the port, and struck the vessel on a sand-bank that lies a little out of the harbour.

The surprise and confusion that must naturally rush into the minds of people who are on the perilous point of being wrecked, can only be felt by those who have stood in that dreadful situation. Each one recommended himself to god, and to his salvation, whilst the sailors hoisted out their long-boat as precipitately as they could; and that which most agitated the thoughts of Frances and Rebecca, was the mutual preservation of each other.

Scarcely was the boat on the surface of the waves, when every one was eager to rush into it; for it was certain the vessel must bulge in a few hours; and to add to their distress, night was coming on. The captain, almost by force, dragged the Lady Abbess and Rebecca from the cabin, where they were joining in fervent prayer; and scarce had he helped the first, half dead as she was, down the side of the ship, when those already in the boat, finding they must all perish if more got in, pushed off instantly, and rowed towards the shore. The only faint hope which now remained to those on board, was, that the vessel might possibly hold together till some assistance could be obtained from the shore; which they still flattered themselves would come, in case the boat reached the land; which it providently did, though with the utmost difficulty. But it was four hours after the arri-

val of the boat, before any one durst venture out; when the storm abating with the departure of the tide, and the day being near dawning, a large boat put off to the wreck: when those who went to assist got to it, they found all the people on board refuged in different places beneath the deck, great part of which was broken away.

Rebecca had remained in the cabin, on one side of which she stood while the other was washed away, and the place more than half filled with water. She was almost exhausted by the terrors and hardships she had sustained, yet life seemed to renew its functions in her countenance, on hearing of the preservation of her friend Frances.

As soon as they had brought her on shore, she was supported by several women, and conducted to the house where the good Abbess was. Frances, transported at the first sight of her friend, ran out to meet her, who, the moment she approached, made an effort to spring forward to her, but sunk down, overpowered, in the arms of the people that had brought her. Frances clasped her hand, and in her eager joy would have uttered something, but could only faintly pronounce her name, and fell at her feet in a swoon. She received every assistance that could be procured; but she was so reduced, her strength and spirits were so exhausted, that all her attendants gave her up for dead.

Frances, though still sinking from the shock and agitation of the preceding night, forgot, in her attention to her friend, her own sufferings. She often accused herself as the fatal cause of all that had befallen her, by suffering her attendance in this expedition. Rebecca chid her for thinking so, declaring it was the will of heaven, to which she patiently submitted. "We did not come into the world together," she would often say; "we cannot expect we are destined to die together; yet I rejoice that life is the gift of God to us this day,

as much as on our birth-days, when we came first into the world." With such reasons this good young woman soothed her friend's disasters; and in a few days they were both fit to pursue their journey, which they now planned to be to York, to see the Minster, and converse with their friends that abode in that ancient city.

In their way thither, they called at many gentlemen's houses, which at that time was the hospitable mode of travelling. At one of these, Sir William Widdrington's, where they were most nobly entertained, was Sir John Tempest, the cruel Knight first mentioned at the beginning of this history. Rebecca was now most fearfully confounded at the sight of him; and he was not a little surprised at finding her in such company; and so much improved since he saw her last, that he began to think on his former harshness; and actually, after a few days observance, made fair overtures to her: all which she refused, with apparent scorn and disdain.

Things remained in this manner until they returned from their visit to the Minster, when the Knight became so earnest in his suit to Rebecca, that notwithstanding the disparity of their years, and the recollection of his former ill usage, of which she remembered the last instance amongst the St. Vincent's Rocks, she consented to become his wife, upon certain covenants and conditions, to which he readily subscribed; declaring still the stars would have it so, and now he saw that she was born to good fortune.

Nothing could exceed the harmony and good understanding that prevailed between Sir John and Rebecca. Previous to his marriage, he visited his estates in Northumberland. Upon his return, he raised a reversionary life interest for his intended wife, in case he should have no heirs; for on this subject the favourite stars were not quite explicit. It was during his absence on this business, that

Rebecca one day, having a fine large cod for dinner, on opening the belly of it, out dropped the VERY AND IDENTICAL GOLD RING which had been thrown into the sea by Sir John, as related in the former part of this history.

Her astonishment and surprise upon this occasion was so great, that she fainted away, and did not recover herself rightly the whole day. It may be well said, "the ways of Providence are mysterious, and past finding out."

Sir John, on his return, was amazed at this circumstance, as may be supposed; and this accident considerably hastened their nuptials, which were performed with the same identical ring that had lain in the sea so long a time.

The Lady Frances assisted at this wedding; after which she retired to her sisterhood, fully convinced, that marriages are made in heaven before they are consummated on the earth.

Sir John and his lady lived as peaceably and comfortable as could be expected from an union formed between parties of disparity of years, but whose judgment was too wise to differ about trifles. In short, Sir John was not very cross, and Rebecca was affectionate. The Lancashire Knight, Sir John's brother, died about this time, and left his sister-in-law a small estate, near Bow, in Essex. The grief his demise occasioned, hastened Sir John off the stage; for, towards his latter end, his behaviour to his relations began to trouble him much; and so it is the case with many when the time is past, and there is no recall. He survived his brother but a few months, when he changed this life for another, leaving a wife not yet past her prime, and unincumbered with a family.

By his death she inherited a considerable property in land and ready money. She did not on this occasion give herself entirely up to grief, but remained firm as a centinel upon post. Resignation

to the will of God she entirely submitted to, and in this she was comforted and supported by her friend Frances.

This event was another incentive for retirement. Rebecca had long considered the world as too changeable to form any settlement in it, and which every one on such occasion must inevitably feel. But when time and reflection had somewhat calmed the perturbation of her mind, she went to reside upon her estate at Bow, where she was visited by the Lady Frances, and her brother, Mr. Elton, who began to think Rebecca had charms that he had never discovered before; in fact, the youthful effervescence of his blood was over, and he had long looked for an equal match to settle with, and his estate was large, and unincumbered.

The preliminaries of this agreement were not long arranging, and Rebecca went a third time to the altar, to be joined at last to the best friend, and the son of the only one she had ever known, when her innocence was at stake under the cholerick disposition of an austere and infatuated man.

Mr. Thomas Elton had been a Turkey merchant, a very profitable branch of commerce at that time; but a little before his marriage, he retired with a good sufficiency, enough to make life comfortable. Her fortune being also very considerable by the accession of her late husband's, she, according to the custom of women left dowry, retained the name of BERRY, upon which was hitched the possession of her Leicestershire estate.

Her friend Frances visited her once more, about eleven years after she was settled at Bow, where being taken ill, she died, and was buried in a vault in Stepney Church Yard, where some time after she followed herself; so that one grave contained their remains, who in life had but one heart. Mr. Elton survived his wife but a short time; and after his death, a monument was erected to per-

petuate the memory of the, FISH and the RING, on the east side of the church. It is a plain tablet, on which is inscribed,

HERE LYETH INTERRED
THE BODY OF DAME REBECCA BERRY,
THE WIFE OF THOMAS ELTON, OF STRATFORD
LE BOW, GENT.
WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE, APRIL 26, 1696,
AGED FIFTY-TWO YEARS.

Come, ladies, you that would appear
Like angels fair, come, dress you here;
Come, dress you at this marble stone,
And make that humble grace your own,
Which once adorn'd as fair a mind
As e'er lodged in womankind:
So she was dress'd, whose humble life
Was free from pride, was free from strife,
Free from all envious brawls and jars,
Of human life the civil wars;
These ne'er disturb'd her peaceful mind,
Which still was gentle, still was kind.
Her very looks, her garb, her mien,
Disclos'd the humble soul within;
Trace her thro' ev'ry scene of life,
View her as widow, virgin, wife,
Still the same humble she appears,
The same in youth, the same in years;
The same in low, in high estate;
Ne'er vex'd with this, ne'er mov'd with that.
Go, ladies, now, and if you'd be
As fair, as great, as good as she,
Go, learn of her humility.

To conclude this short and true account of one of the most singular incidents that ever, perhaps, occurred in the annals of human history, one thing is remarkable, and must convince the world, more than huge volumes of divinity, that a resignation to the ways of Providence is not inconsistent with temporal pursuits, and that when united, they become the unfailing sources of private and public felicity.

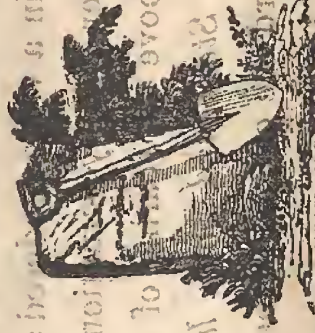
End of the Fish and the Ring.

THE AWFUL MOMENT.

I SAILED from New Orleans in the beginning of February, in a small schooner, bound for New York. we descended the river without any accident, and went to sea with a fine breeze. We had favourable winds and good weather for the first five days; on the morning of the sixth it began to cloud up; as the day wore away the gloom increased: and when the night set in, it was as intensely dark as I ever remember to have seen it. The novelty and interest of my situation prevented me from turning in. The scene was awfully grand; the rolling of the thunder could just be distinguished above the roaring of the waves, and the vivid flashes of lightning dispersed for a moment the gloom, and showed the raging waters round us. I continued walking the deck with the captain, who was relating to me some of the many dangers and difficulties that a life of thirty years on the ocean had subjected him to. He had been thrice shipwrecked, and twice captured by the enemy in the late war with England. He was a good seaman,

and had all the virtues and vices of a sailor. We continued on deck some time; the wind was increased to a gale. The waves ran mountains high, and our little vessel danced over them in fine style, when accidentally casting my eye over her side, I thought I perceived something dark moving in the water. I pointed it out to the captain, who not sooner saw it, than with an exclamation of terrors and despair he cried, 'We are all lost'; and sprung to the binnacle for his trumpet. I saw in an instant our danger; it was a large ship bearing full upon us. I knew if she struck us our destruction was inevitable; she would pass over us in a moment; the people on her deck would be scarce sensible of the event, and we should be buried in the ocean without the least possibility of relief. The captain twice raised his trumpet to hail her, but fright and despair made him mute. I snatched it from him, and in a voice rendered supernaturally loud by the danger of my situation, and which was heard even above the roaring of the waves, I hailed her with 'Starboard your helm.' In an instant after I heard the officer of the deck, in a voice scarcely less loud than mine, pass the word of 'Hard a Starboard.' In another moment she passed us with the velocity of lightning, her huge bulk and lofty sails casting a still deeper gloom over the deck of our little vessel. She rolled in the chasm occasioned by the passing of the vast body so nigh her, and nearly upset. I sunk on the

deck overcome by the intensity of my feelings, deprived as it were of the power of motion. It did not recover myself and approached our captain; he was standing in the same position as before the vessel had passed us, and appeared to be insensible to the objects around him. I spoke to him, but he answered me not; I shook him, and he roused as from a stupor or reverie. It was some time before his mind resumed her empire, and he afterwards told me, that in all his danger and perils, and when death stared him in the face, and deliverance seemed impossible, he was never so impressed with the certainty of his destruction as at that moment. As for me, I shall never forget my feelings on that eventful night, and cannot even now look back without horror on the danger of my situation.



THE END.

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